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Feature Focus - November 2012



Members in Discernment Gather in Decatur for Their Semi-Annual Retreat.

On Saturday, October 27, over thirty members in discernment, advisers, pastors, licensed ministers and guests of the Southeast Conference gathered for a day long retreat at the Care and Counseling Center of Georgia in Decatur. Participants came from Tennessee, Alabama as well as Georgia and represented thirteen congregations of the Conference. This is one of the semi-annual gatherings that members in discernment are expected to attend each year of their discernment. The purpose of the gatherings will be to provide guidance through a process that was begun this year that represents a dramatic shift in the process of preparation for ministry in the United Church of Christ.



Tim Downs pointed out that because this is a process that is in formation, the feedback and input of those who are in discernment is essential to the shaping of it. Much of the conversation focused on the shaping of a portfolio which is at the heart of the journey of discernment. Portfolios are organized around the Four Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry; spiritual foundation, UCC identity, personal and professional formation, and knowledge and skills. Sally Purvis and Laura Arnold led an extended conversation for members in discernment on the shaping of their portfolios.. In a separate meeting with Tim Downs and Christy Bonner, those who are in the process of exploring the discernment process, but have not yet begun it, engaged in a dynamic conversation about the process of discernment. In response to comments that the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministries were too general, Christy Bonner said, "the Marks do not provide a formula, they do challenge each of us in discernment to be grownups, to evidence a maturity and groundedness of faith. It is a guide to help us find our own voices".

Kirk Lyman-Barner, a member in discernment himself, and a member of the Member in Discernment Committee, led the group in a process of listing ways in which the semi-annual retreats could be more useful to members in discernment. The group listed out opportunities and topics that they would like to have be a part of their formation. There was enthusiasm about the proposal to take a trip to the national headquarters in Cleveland, workshops on appreciative inquiry, family dynamics, and boundary training. Additionally they listed things they never learned in seminary that they thought would be helpful to their formation including; stewardship education, financial management, organizational and administrative development, and time management. The group included candidates seeking all three forms of authorization for ministry: ordination, licensing, and commissioning.



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[Commentary: Join the Rainbow Scarf Project!](#)

The UCC Penn Central Conference minister invites all take a stand against violence and bullying by joining the General Synod 29 Rainbow Scarf Project.



Southeast Conference FAQ's

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three forms of authorization for ministry, ordination, licensing, and commissioning.
The next retreat will take place on March 9.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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Steps to Planting a New Church

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